

from the Federal Government to intervene and to listen to your communications between one American and another.

So I stand here today to emphasize that the court system, the FISA system, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, is an imperative to protect you as Americans when your government wants to spy on you.

Will we be safe from terrorists? Absolutely. Because part of the terrorism is to ensure that information is shared with law enforcement so that we can be in front of this issue.

I am looking forward to the markup. I'm looking forward to an opportunity to devise legislation that preserves the preciousness of the Bill of Rights and the fourth amendment. We cannot step back and be subjected to our own terror, and that is to be frightened so much that we take the Bill of Rights and extinguish it.

I may not agree with the interpretation of the second amendment, but it does exist and it is part of the Bill of Rights. You may have a different interpretation of the first amendment, but it is part of the Bill of Rights. You may have a suspect interpretation of the fourth amendment, but the language is clear: you are to be protected against unreasonable search and seizure. It is unreasonable to not go into a court established to do that, to protect you, to have a court objectively look at what the urgency is and to provide that intervention to protect your rights.

I look forward to working with a number of colleagues on language that I have joined and written to establish the parameters of protecting us from the violation of the fourth amendment.

Keep the FISA law as it is. Modernize it. Ensure that the FISA court that intervenes protects our rights and keeps our values, the values that so many have strived so hard to seek a place in the sun in this Nation because they truly believe that the democracy and the liberties that we have are worth protecting, worth protecting with their lives. And I believe here in the United States Congress, we must stand in that tradition.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings or other audible conversation is in violation of the rules of the House.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION FINANCING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I thank you, and I'm proud to be on the floor this afternoon to talk about some issues that are very important to me and I think very important to most Members of this body and certainly to the American public.

Just a few minutes ago, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), a very well, well respected, fine Member of this body, did a 5-minute talking about the problem with Presidential election financing. And I think her comments, Mr. Speaker, were so compelling that indeed people, our guests in the gallery, when she completed her remarks, broke out in spontaneous applause. Maybe they knew that they shouldn't, or maybe they didn't know, but, you know, they were responding to something that they heard that they liked. And certainly, I can understand that. Folks do that every now and then. I almost felt like applauding Ms. KAPTUR as well because she was speaking the truth and bringing our attention to a real problem.

I used to enjoy so much going around the district, Mr. Speaker, and talking to school children, whether they were at the elementary, middle or high school level, and saying to them, of course, they'd always ask, Well, Congressman GINGREY, what's your favorite issue or what is your favorite thing that you do as a Member of Congress? And I would say to them, what I'm doing right now; what I'm doing right now, speaking to young people to try to inspire them. And heretofore I would say to them, the great, one of the great things about our country is anybody in America can grow up to be President. It doesn't matter who you are or what your background. Anybody in this great country of the United States of America can grow up to be President.

Sadly, today, that's probably not true, and I think that's what Ms. KAPTUR was trying to point out. There's just something wrong in River City with all these hundreds of millions of dollars that have to be raised for a candidate of either party, the two major political parties, to have a chance to, yes, be grown up now and have an opportunity to become President. There are many people that are very qualified, I think, that would make a great President, man or woman, white or black, it doesn't matter where you come from, your meager beginnings possibly. But you don't have that chance because of what she was pointing out.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, I want to digress just for a moment. Speaking of young people, I don't think we take enough time to thank our young men and women, our young students, our pages that work in this body and in the other body, in the House and the Senate, on behalf of Members of Congress. And usually the pages are here at the request of a Member. And this young man that's here on the floor tonight put these posters up for me and made sure that I've got a cup of water in case

my mouth gets a little dry, as we continue to speak over these next 30 to 45 minutes. I think we just owe them a lot of thanks. What they do is much more, of course, than these tasks. And this young man, Edward White, Mr. Speaker, is from Atlanta, Georgia. I'm from the metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia area. I represent northwest Georgia. He's here through Congressman JOHN LEWIS, the dean of the Georgia delegation, his office. And I just want to take an opportunity to thank him and all the young men and women that help us so much and don't get as much credit as they should.

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But my purpose of this hour was to bring to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, another issue which has gotten completely out of control. And, yes, it has to do with spending, kind of on the theme that Ms. KAPTUR brought to us in regard to Presidential elections, and that is the issue of earmarks.

Now, the general public, I think, is fed up with so-called earmark abuse. Sometimes we euphemistically will refer to those as "Member initiatives." Some people, of course, don't like that term and they will call it "pork." But the situation is getting completely out of hand, and that's what I want to talk about primarily in the next 30 minutes or so, Mr. Speaker.

We can solve this problem. We have got a problem, and it is not unique to the Republican Party. It is not unique to the Democratic Party. I know some of my colleagues, hopefully, who are watching us during this time and maybe the general public is aware of an article just this past week. And I hold up the magazine, Mr. Speaker, it is known as "CQ Weekly." This magazine comes out every week. I know that it's difficult for Members in the back rows of the Chamber to see the magazine that I'm holding up. Maybe the cameras can focus in on that. But basically the title of this article, and there are several articles written about the problem, is "Playing the Earmark Game." "Playing the Earmark Game."

Let me reference here in just a second my first slide, this poster to my left, to show you what I'm talking about.

Now, what is an earmark? Well, an earmark is when a Member of a congressional district sees a need among those 670,000 people that he or she represents. Possibly a school system or a county commissioner or just an individual, or maybe it's a Head Start program, has brought an issue to that Member, Mr. Speaker, and says, We have a great need, Congressman or Congresswoman, in our district. You represent us. We voted for you. We have great confidence in you. But our community has a desperate need, and I want you to ask the Federal Government to try to help us in the funding process.

Well, when the Member looks at that and decides that that is a very worthwhile project and then sort of applies